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A number of character string determination sections determine whether a pixel of interest corresponds to a character or a line drawing. The character string determination sections use mutually different determination methods. A character determination selector section selects a determination result output from the character determination section that uses a determination method most suited to a background sensing result obtained by a background sensing section. In this manner, either the character or the line drawing can be determined using an efficient method in accordance with the background state of a color image.